

Home

by sevenchapters

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Here"

Home

Stefan makes his way into the nearest bar, compelling the bartender to go home handing her a hundred dollar bill right before she says anything. Watching as she slides it in her purse and walks outside without another word. After tonight he needed a drink.

"_I tried." Stefan sighs closing the door to the crypt "Months and months of searching, following clues from Alaric that ultimately led to nothing. Literally nothing. A field full of open space. So, I decided to take a break and went to start a new life. Same name, but 'human'. Anyway during that time I met someone, we became friendish, had a mutual...benefit for each other. She helps me get you and Bonnie back. I save her from the wrath of Klaus. Guess I wasn't as low key as I thought." he shrugs "Not that it matters now because Caroline and your sidekick teamed up, hunted me down and dragged me back here. I can admit it was selfish and I was being an ass by not telling them. Letting them think I was still looking but, I think I should get a freebie after years of being-_

"_A self sacrificing martyr?" Damon asks cutting Stefan off from his rant, fighting back a smirk at the look on his face when he turns to face him "Yeah, you deserve a freebie and I'll be honest, giving up on me...I probably deserve it. But Bonnie?" he frowns, shaking his head "Bonnie is going to kick your ass. And I'll gladly stand by and let it happen. Hell, I might even sneak in a few kicks."_

"_Damon?" Stefan gapes, not being able to believe his eyes._

"_In the flesh." he smiles walking up to his brother, smirking when Stefan reaches out to touch his shoulder. Smiling when he pulls him into a hug, "I missed you too, brother."_

"_H-how?" he asks pulling back "I thought you were gone."_

"_Long story. One that you aren't nearly drunk enough to hear right now." feeling a twinge when his face crumples._

"_Where?" he whispers "Where is she?"_

Damon takes a breath "She didn't make it."

Stefan takes a swig from the bottle of bourbon in his hand, staring straight ahead.

"_What do you mean she didn't make it?"_

"_Well, when the other side went down, we were in Mystic Falls. Except in nineteen ninety four."_

"_Damon."_

"_We were on our way back but a psychotic unkillable bastard swooped in and shot her and it all went to hell from there."_

Stefan frowns at him "Unkillable? As in aâ€¢;" he shrugs Damon's hands off of him and grabs him by the collar of his shirt "You left her with a-"

"_He's not a vampire." he states calmly, deciding to let Stefan take his anger out on him "He's actually a witchâ€"warlockâ€"siphoner. But anyway, one second we were about to be on our merry way, the next he comes out of nowhere and shoots her. I go to heal her. He goes for the ascendant, Bonnie tells me to go after it-"_

"_So you left her side to stop him from leaving, which somehow resulted in you coming back without her. Leaving __**her**__ alone at the hands of aâ€¢ 'psychotic unkillable bastard'?" he asks, trying to keep himself in check._

"_She didn't give me a choice. I told her to leave but...she told me she wouldn't make it and saved me instead." flinching at the flash of rage he sees in his eyes._

Stefan tightens his grip wanting to take his anger out on Damon but decides to let him go. As much as he'd like to flip on him and say that he was lying, he doesn't, knowing that it's not his fault. Knowing that, that is exactly something Bonnie would do. He looks down not being able to take the look of pity Damon was giving him, and leaves him alone in the crypt knowing he was about to deal with a heartbreak of his own. Figuring that there's no need to make it worse by guilt tripping him.

He drains the remainder of alcohol and slides the empty bottle down to the other end of the bar watching as it bumps into the others, sending one crashing to the floor. Sighing at the fact he made it through three bottles only feeling a little buzz, pushing it aside as he reaches over the bar for another bottle of bourbon starting to open it but stops, a frown settling on his face when something Damon said clicks "_Yeah, you deserve a freebie and I'll be honest, giving up on me...I probably deserve it. But Bonnie?" he frowns, shaking his head "Bonnie is going to kick your ass. And I'll gladly stand by and

let it happen. Hell, I might even sneak in a few kicks."__

"I hope you saved enough for me."

Stefan jumps, the voice breaking him from his stupor. Feeling a tug at the corner of his mouth, but raises the bottle to his lips before he can smile.

"That bad?" he asks turning to Damon.

Damon frowns "What?"

Stefan stares at him, noticing he's in the same mood he was earlier
"You didn't go see Elena?"

"Nope. I never thought I'd ever say this but Elena can wait."
smirking when Stefan blinks "I have all the time in the world to reunite with her. You, on the other hand don't really have that." his voice taking on a wistful tone.

"She told you?" looking back to the bottle in his hands.

"She didn't have to. Out of all the rooms in the house she chose your's. It kind of went over my head because I didn't think she knew it belonged to you but I heard her crying one night. I asked her what was wrong." he grabs a bottle from behind the bar, scrunching his nose when he sees it's Scotch "Apparently, the bed stopped smelling like you." he chuckles "At first I figured it was the alcohol because she had a whole bottle of Sambuca that night. But after that, things started clicking; the staring, you actually smiling, that '_scar'_ on Bonnie's neck, why her scent was on you, why you snapped on me when I said she needed to get over herself. I can go on and on but it'd do more harm than good at this point."

"Yeahâ€|" Stefan breathes after several moments of silence.

"When?"

"Unofficially? Christmas. She felt guilty...like she betrayed Elena, and thought that I used her to get back at Elena for choosing you. Yeah." Stefan nods seeing the confused expression on Damon's face "That was my reaction too. It almost happened again on the island but someone came and interrupted us. After that it was just bad timing, whenever I was making _some _kind of progress something new came along and fucked me over."

"You mean me?"

"And Elena." he admits not seeing the point in denying it "Then she died bringing her ex back. She said it was for Elena but...really? Then you know the whole summer from hell. Two million years later I finally got her back and we were happy, until we both died. The look on her face when she saw meâ€|" he trails off "And in an extra twisted turn of events she accidentally brought me back instead of you."

Damon frowns, wondering why he'd be upset about that.

"That's not even what pissed me off. What really did it was Elena

snapping on her for bringing her back to life without you. It's like she didn't even care that Bonnie was going to die, like she would've been fine if she just had you. But that's your best friend, right?" Stefan takes a swig, shaking his head. "Sorry." he mutters, realizing he was talking about his girlfriend.

Damon chuckles "Seriously, how the hell did I miss this?"

Stefan fights back a retort, forcing a half smile on his lips.

"So what's our plan?"

"Our plan?"

Damon frowns "Yes. Our plan."

"Since when do you-"

"When you're stuck with only one person to talk to, you learn to like them."

"You can't tell them."

Damon looks at him "So you have a brain."

"She kind of forces me to use it."

"Hmph." he smiles "What made you give up?"

Stefan lets out a long breath and pushes his hair back "Alaric told me something about a Gemini Coven. So I followed that and when I found it, there was literally nothing there. And that was the last lead I followed. As for a time frame about a month ago." letting out a strangled groan when Damon hits the back of his head "I deserved that."

"Why?"

"Because there was nothing there. I don't mean an abandoned building, or a group of people that refused to talk. Literally nothing. Do you honestly think I would've just gave up if there was something else I could do?"

Damon laughs "Seriously, where was I?"

"If you don't want my answer, I suggest that you stop asking." chuckling when Damon's nostrils flare.

"Wait," Damon frowns "What was the name of the coven again?"

"The Gemini Coven." he answers "Why?"

"It's not a dead end!" Damon smirks "Well not entirely." bracing himself for the impact when he sees Stefan's face go from confused, to worry and then to anger. Glancing down to his brother's hand, folding his lips watching blood and alcohol covering his hands, back to his face flinching at the look in his eyes. He opens his mouth ready to apologize, knowing it's not the time to make jokes.

"Don't." Stefan cuts him off "Just tell me what you know."

"Why are being so restrained?" cringing at his own choice of words.

"Because I'm not the only one who has relationship problems."

"What are you talking about?"

"Elena had Alaric erase her memories of you." Stefan answers after a moment, watching silently as Damon turns to the bottle in his hands opening it before knocking it back.

"Just give me a minute." Damon says when he sees Stefan open his mouth "Alone." he adds when Stefan turns away from him going back to his own drowning in his sorrows.

Stefan turns his back to him and hops down from the stool, strolling out of the bar leaving Damon inside, without saying another word.

* * *

><p>Thirty minutes later Stefan's sitting down on the couch in Alaric's apartment with Elena, Caroline, Enzo and Alaric. Having decided that it was best to just tell them all in one sweep instead of doing it individually. He had called Matt but he didn't answer, as for Jeremy he didn't really care.</p>

"He's back? What do you mean he's back?" Elena asks frantically pacing back and forth, she stops "Wait." her voice turning hopeful "Does this mean that Bonnie is-"

"No." Stefan answers looking down "He said she found peace."

Caroline and Alaric exchange glances wondering why his tone changed. While Enzo chuckles, finding the revelation amusing especially since it seemed to go right over everyone else's heads. He wondered why Stefan payed little to no mind at Caroline's crush on him but now it made sense. "Nothing." is his reply when Caroline asks him what he's laughing at after glancing at Stefan, seeing the cold look in his eyes as if he was daring him to say something. Under different circumstances he wouldn't have even hesitated to tell everyone but considering Caroline's feelings he felt that it was best to wait.

"Well, where is he?" Alaric asks after it becomes clear that Stefan isn't going to say anything else.

Stefan opens his mouth, but stops when his phone starts to ring. Taking it out of his pocket he sees Damon's name on the screen and immediately answers it.

"Hey asshole, do you want to tell me why no one is answering my calls?"

Stefan smiles at his greeting and looks at everyone who have looks of guilt on their faces except for Caroline who looks indifferent.

"Maybe they think it's some cruel joke." Stefan suggests when it's clear no one is going to say anything, deciding to give them a way out "Would you answer your phone if you saw Alaric's name on your phone if he didn't make it through?" he trails off not being able to say her name.

"Yeah, I guess you're right. Well anyway, how about you get ba-"

"I'll have everyone meet us at Alaric's apartment. Caroline told me that he's the only person that's actually gotten use to the fact that we can't go to Mystic Falls. Her and Elena have pretty much clinged to their dorm room to not have to deal with the reality of everything. I'll text you the address." he hangs up and braces himself for Caroline's retort. Scowling when Enzo starts to clap.

"When did you become so fast on your feet?"

Stefan looks at Alaric after putting his phone down "Since I had to dodge questions from your leads." he snarks, before apologizing.

"Or it's one of the many things you've been keeping from everyone." Enzo says from his seat.

"If you're about to bring up the Gemini Coven, save it, I already followed that and it leads to nothing. If you hadn't hunted me down and killed my friend-"

"Oh is that what you called it? Is she aware that you two were only friends?"

"Then we would actually have something." Stefan finishes, deciding to ignore his interruption. "Ivy and I had a deal, she actually had something useful but you killed it."

Everyone turns to the door when it opens, Damon leaning on the doorway. The smile on his face disappearing when he sees everyone staring at him, having expected no one but Alaric to be here.

"Let's go." is all he says, looking at Stefan.

"If you had answered your phone you would know that this is a two person meeting." he states when Stefan gives him a puzzled look..

Elena frowns "Is this because-"

"No, believe it or not, this has nothing to do with you." almost rolling his eyes when she looks at him in shock " It's just that Stefan is the only person that needs to know about this."

"Stefan?" she frowns "Stefan doesn't even!" she trails off not believing she should have to explain why he is the last person that should know more than she does "She's my best friend, I think I should be the one that you should talk to."

Damon looks at his brother waiting for him to speak up. Feeling as though he shouldn't be the one to tell everyone. Wondering why or how no one else knew...well mainly Caroline.

"Bonnie's my girlfriend." Stefan says after an awkward silence fills the room.

Caroline feels her heart drop to her stomach "What?" she breathes.

Elena blinks and shakes her head "No." not believing her ears. "You wouldn't-"

"It's been years since we broke up I think that's way more than enough time for it to be okay that I move on." he says turning to Elena, not being able to bring himself to meet Caroline's gaze for some reason. Ultimately deciding that it's because he knows he should have told her a long time ago.

"Well now that, that's over." Damon says from his place in the threshold waiting for Stefan to move "How about we finish our talk?"

"Depends, am I going to want to strangle you?" standing up from the couch.

"When don't you want to strangle me?" Damon smirks.

"Good point." Stefan nods walking past him.

"Okay, so you remember how I was telling you about us being in nineteen ninety four?" Damon asks once they're in his car.

Stefan frowns but nods, wondering why that's relevant.

"Well that's a Prison World that was created by the coven and a Bennett witch."

"Of course, two things we don't have." Stefan mutters, turning his head to look out the window.

"Not necessarily." Damon states. "We have one of each."

Stefan tilts his head but remembers Lucy "I thought you said he killed his whole family." looking down at his hand searching for any unhealed gashes.

"No he left his sister."

"The whole merge thing." he sighs, remembering how they get a leader.

"Yeah." Damon confirms, wondering how he knows about that.

"So we have to find the sister and track Lucy down."

Damon rolls his eyes wondering how his brother gets by "If we find Lucy we won't have to worry about finding the sister."

"What makes you think Lucy will know where she is?"

"You really think the coven would lose contact with the witch line that helped put her lunatic brother under lock and key?"

Stefan feels a tug at the corner of his mouth "I guess not."

"You don't sound too happy."

"Every time something seems simple, it always goes to hell. So as much as I want to think this is what will get Bonnie back I don't want to get my hopes up. We need a Plan B."

"Plan B is including the others so let's just cross our fingers and hope this one goes through."

End
file.